



THE  
 Prince of Oranges  
 S P E E C H  
 TO THE  
 LORDS, &c. concerned with him.

**I**T is not assuredly any ways to be doubted (most Noble Lords) but that we now treat upon a common Cause. The one and the other *Germany* are sufficiently united in Situation, Tongue, Name, Traffick, Life, and in all things else. And who knows not, That in former times they both made but one Body? their People do chiefly affect Liberty. And tho' in *Flanders* the Prince be Hereditary, whereas in *Germany* he is Elective, yet almost the same Pre-eminence is due by them to their States, as is here attributed to your Dyets. But how oft, and with how much Labour and Danger hath it behoved the one and the other Nation, to oppose themselves to the Avaritiousness of their Princes? I will leave the pursuit of Ancient Affairs, that I may come to the more Modern; and those of *Germany*, that I may defend to the present affairs of *Flanders*. When the Emperour, *Charles V.* was dead, every one knows the King's Son chiefest desire was, to leave those Parts, and settle himself in *Spain*. Being there wholly transformed into the Sense and Customs of that People, he grew desirous to govern *Flanders* after the same manner and Empire as *Spain* was governed. And what more imperious Minister of State could he leave behind him with the Dutches of *Parma*, than the Cardinal *Granville*? Did I say Minister of State? nay, rather supreme Governour; since whilst he was there, the Dutches bore only the name of Regent; The whole Power lay in him, base *Burgundian*! The first Author of *Flanders*'s Mischief; and who deserves chiefly to be punished, since the Fault was chiefly his. The Government of the Ecclesiastical and Temporal Affairs was suddenly altered in divers sorts by absolute Authority; but chiefly by new Edicts, still more grievous to the Conscience, and by introducing the Inquisition. The secretest Oracles are come from the Council of *Spain* and are executed by secret Consultations in *Flanders*. If the Nobility have complained, their Complaints have proved vain; to Petition, is counted Treachery: To seem troubled, *Rebellion*; and the casual heady-giddiness of the Common People, a premeditated *Insurrection* of the whole Country. In fine, nothing but to have a pretence to use Force against *Flanders*, was expected in *Spain*. And what more light Pretences could be taken, than to go about to suppress those Tumults, which were seen to cease almost as soon as begun? When so suddenly hereupon the *Flemish* are insolently declared in *Spain* to be Rebels to God, and to the King: And a Foreign Army marches to cause *Flanders* to be treated hereafter, not as a successive Nation, but as a conquered Country. And who could be better chosen to execute such Violences than the Duke of *Alva*? the most haughty minded Man of all *Spain*; *Flanders*'s greatest Enemy; and who knows better than any other, how to extinguish all remainders of Religion, and in lieu thereof to use all Tyranny. And just so it fell out. He hath begun to raise Citadels in the chiefest Cities: he hath placed Garrisons every where; the places of Execution run down with Blood in all Towns; no more

Home-Laws are heard of, but foreign ones. The Country is almost unpeopled by Exilement, Imprisonment and Running away. And nothing but ghastly looks, complaints, misery, desparation and calamity is seen every where. In this deplorable state is *Flanders* at the present. How much more happy then is *Germany*, which enjoys her former liberty, and which abhorring all foreign Force, knows no other Empire than her own? I partake of this felicity, for from hence I derive my Blood, and my first stem remains still here. Nay, I am more hated in *Spain* than any other of the *Flemish*, by reason of my *German* Spirit. I am held to be the Contriver of Conspiracies, the Head of Sedition, the Pestilence of those Countries. Their greatest anger thunders against me, and the severest punishments are already fallen upon me. Thus they seek to turn my glory into infamy; And what greater glory can there be, than to maintain the liberty of a mans Country, and to die rather than be enslaved? Then *Spain* who am both a *German* and a *Fleming*, after having laid before you the miseries of the *Lower-Germany*, whose tears and supplications I bring hither with me, do in her name implore the help and protection of the *Upper-Germany*. But such recourse for refuge will not avail, unless you your selves repute the Cause which is now in hand, to be common as well to *Germany* as to *Flanders*, as I at first took for granted. And who can doubt? Who is not aware of the *Spaniards* vast Designs? Doubtless a desire of Domination doth naturally reign in all Men. One will draw on another; nor doth what is possest give satisfaction. But how immense, how immoderate doth this thirst appear particularly in the *Spaniards*? they think not their unknown Worlds sufficient to quench it; and will the more extend their Empire still further in those which are known. They fix their eyes, and their machinations much more upon *Europe* in particular. When they shall have oppressed *Flanders*, and have gotten so opportune a seat for their Arms, what Province will they next fall upon? that certainly which they shall have most reason to fear. He who will lay the foundations of Servitude well, first seeks to beat down the Bulwarks of Liberty. Wherefore knowing that they shall be most withstood by the power and undaunted Spirits of this Nation, which in all things is so united to *Flanders*, they will forthwith bend all their Forces hitherward. It may then be concluded, that the *Spanish* Forces being in *Flanders*, will be always ready to enter *Germany*; and then what will your miseries be? when their Colonies shall likewise be seen here; new Faces, new Customs, severe Laws more severely executed, heavy yokes upon mens persons, and more heavy upon their consciences? This point being then granted, that the danger will be common among us, the other will be clear, that the cause should likewise be reputed common: The rest follows on in consequence. One Neighbour runs to quench the fire that is kindled in another Neighbour's house. When a River threatens to break in, who runs not from all sides to mend the Banks? The same course ought now to be held; all you must haste to help the *Flemish*, since you are the first that are likely to feel the flames of their fire, and they who shall first partake of the inundation of so many miseries which they suffer. But do not believe that they will linger in expectation of your aids. They will move as soon as they shall see you move; and their worth and vertue, which by so unexpected and cruel a violence, is rather stupified than oppressed, will return with greater vigour than before. What cannot armed desparation do? What dares it not? The entrance will be always easie from these Parts into *Friesland*, and into the Provinces of *Flanders* which are on this side the *Rhine*; that River will with like easiness be at all times past over: all the chief Cities will throw open their Gates. The Nobility and all the whole Country will joyn in the same Opinion. But I came short, when I said that only *Germany* and *Flanders* would joyn in this Cause: *France* and *England*, and the other Northern Countries, will undoubtedly joyn with us, since they stand in like fear of the *Spanish* Forces. He that commits Violence, doth not always boast thereof; and how oft do we see Oppression prove the ruine of the Oppressor; it may so fall out, as whilst the *Spaniards* do so greedily gape after other Mens Estates, they may chance to lose their own; the *Flemish* expect only your Assistance, to escape so hard a Slavery: And I, in their Names, do once again earnestly implore it. The Cause cannot be more Just, nor more easily helped, and it is yours no less than ours. All Neighbours will take it for their own concernment; and the whole North will favour it. But as the Defence will in the first place fall to your share, so the first place of Victory will be given to your Forces; and so by the Title of our being oppressed, you shall for ever be accounted our Deliverers. See C. Benevog. Hist Part I.